

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action of March 31, 2006, claims 1-6 and 10-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,908,347 ("Nakajima et al.") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,346,038 B1 ("Kajiwara et al."). In response to the Office Action, Applicant has not amended any claims to place the claims in better condition for Appeal. Thus, no claim amendments need to be entered. However, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for the independent claims 1 and 10, as explained below.

Specifically, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the teachings of Nakajima et al. and Kajiwara et al. to derive the claimed invention. Thus, Applicant respectfully asserts that the independent claims 1 and 10, as well as the dependent claims 2-6 and 11-23, are not obvious in view of the cited references of Nakajima et al. and Kajiwara et al., and requests that these pending claims be allowed.

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A. Patentability of Independent Claims 1 and 10

The Final Office Action has rejected the independent claims 1 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nakajima et al. in view of Kajiwara et al. In response to Applicant's remarks filed on December 22, 2005, the Examiner states on page 3 of the latest Office Action that "[i]t is noted that applicant has claimed object relay devices that *include* a loading/unloading cup" and that "Applicant has not limited the invention to carrying single wafers." However, claimed limitations are not relevant to the issue of whether there is a valid suggestion or motivation to combine the teachings of prior art references.

Regardless of the limitations of claims 1 and 10, there is no suggestion or motivation to modify the polishing system of Nakajima et al. to include the wafer loading/unloading device of Kajiwara et al. The Examiner states on page 3 of the Office Action that "the elimination of structure to carry several substrates and its function in

favor of structure for carrying one substrate would have been *prima facie* obvious, as the number of substrates transported is not critical to the functioning of the claimed device." A major problem with this assertion is that such modification of the polishing system of Nakajima et al. would render the modified polishing system inoperable. The entire 5 polishing system of Nakajima et al. is based on using carrying plates 12, each of which holds a number of wafers, to convey wafers 11 throughout the system. The transferring units 60 of the polishing system of Nakajima et al. transfer the carrying plates 12 between the polishing units 50. The wafer loading/unloading device of Kajiwara et al. is designed to transfer a single wafer. If the transferring units 60 of the polishing system of Nakajima 10 et al. are replaced or modified with the wafer loading/unloading devices of Kajiwara et al., these devices would not be able to transfer the carrying plates between the polishing units 50.

In order for the modified polishing system to be operable, the individual wafers 11 15 on the carrying plates 12 would somehow have to be removed from the carrying plates, transferred individually using the wafer loading/unloading device of Kajiwara et al. and placed back in the same or different carrying plates to transfer the wafers between the polishing units 50 of Nakajima et al., which is not practical, if not impossible without a complete modification of the polishing system of Nakajima et al. Thus, one of ordinary 20 skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the polishing system of Nakajima et al. using the wafer loading/unloading device of Kajiwara et al. in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that the independent claims 1 and 10 are not obvious in view of the cited prior art references of Nakajima et al. and Kajiwara et al., and requests that these claims be allowed.

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B. Patentability of Dependent Claims 2-6 and 11-23

Each of the dependent claims 2-6 and 11-23 depends on one of the independent claims 1 and 10. As such, these dependent claims include all the limitations of their

respective base claims. Therefore, Applicant submits that these dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims.

5 Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims in view of the
remarks made herein. A notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

In Kwon Jeong

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